

## 4. CONFLICTS BETWEEN RESOURCES AND PUBLIC USE

DFG manages the NSMWA to protect and enhance aquatic and terrestrial habitats for plant, wildlife, and fish species and to provide the public with compatible recreational and educational uses. Although the mission of the DFG and the function of the NSMWA are focused on natural resource management, potential conflicts between resource protection and public uses as well as conflicts among the different uses can be a challenge for the DFG in managing NSMWA. This chapter examines the current management issues in the NSMWA.

### 4.1 PUBLIC USE REGULATIONS OF THE NSMWA

The regulations guiding public use of all DFG Wildlife Areas are outlined in Title 14, Section 550 of the California Code of Regulations. Additional regulations specific to the NSMWA are outlined in Title 14, Section 551 of the Fish and Game Code. The following Section 551 regulations pertain specifically to the NSMWA:

- Method of Take Restrictions: No rifles or pistols may be used or possessed (CCR 551 [51a]).
- Hunt Days: Saturdays, Sundays, and Wednesdays during open seasons for authorized species, except that doves and rabbits may be hunted daily during the September dove season (CCR 551 [51b]).
- Authorized Species: Waterfowl, coots, moorhens, snipe, rabbits, quail, pheasants, and doves (CCR 551 [51c]).
- Camping and trailers: not allowed (CCR 551 [51d]).
- Special Restrictions (CCR 551 [51e]):
  - White Slough Unit: Closed to all hunting and firearms and archery equipment use.
  - American Canyon Unit: Closed to all hunting and firearms and archery equipment use south of the PG&E power lines.
  - Green Island Unit and Southern Crossing Unit: Closed to the public until restoration activities are near completion.
  - Tolay Creek Unit: Only steel or other nontoxic shot approved by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service may be used or possessed south of SR 37.
  - All units: Dogs are not allowed from March 2 through June 30 and must be on a leash at all other times except as follows: holders of a valid hunting license may use dogs during hunting seasons.
  - Campfires are prohibited.
- Hunting regulations for waterfowl, upland game, and state and federal areas that apply to the NSMWA can be obtained from:

California Fish and Game Commission  
1416 Ninth Street  
Sacramento, California 95814  
<http://www.fgc.ca.gov/html/regs.html>

#### 4.2 DUMPING/ILLEGAL CAMPING/VANDALISM

Dumping and littering is a problem throughout the NSMWA. Vandalism to property of NSMWA such as graffiti, firearm damage, and fence cutting also occurs. Areas where dumping is a particular problem include along Skaggs Island Road adjacent to the Sonoma Creek Unit, the American Canyon Unit, and at the end of Green Island Road adjacent to the Green Island Unit.



#### 4.3 MOSQUITO ABATEMENT

Compared with the historical levels of mosquito-borne diseases in humans, levels of mosquito-borne diseases in California are low (URS 2006a). These diseases, including encephalitis, West Nile virus, and malaria, however, are still present or could be readily reintroduced (URS 2006a). All species of mosquitoes require standing water to complete their growth cycle. Any body of standing water represents a potential mosquito-breeding site. Areas that pond surface water and are flushed by daily tides are not stagnant for periods sufficient for mosquito larvae to mature; therefore, such areas are not mosquito production sources and are not of concern to mosquito abatement districts.

Mosquitoes are adapted to breed during periods of temporary flooding and can complete their life cycles before water evaporates and predator populations become well established (URS 2006a). Poor drainage conditions that result in ponding water and water management practices associated with the creation of seasonal wetlands for waterfowl use result in the types of flooding that can produce problem numbers of mosquitoes (URS 2006a).

Seasonal wetlands and stagnant pools and ponds exist in the NSMWA and are potential mosquito habitats. DFG has been working with the local Mosquito Abatement Districts to monitor potential mosquito breeding sites and applying treatments as needed.

Mosquitoes were found in the following units of the NSMWA during an inspection conducted by the Napa County Mosquito Abatement District (NCMAD) in 2000: Huichica Creek, Napa River, and American Canyon (NCMAD 2000). Pursuant to Health and Safety Code Sec. 2283.5, a service agreement was signed between the DFG and the NCMAD for mosquito inspection and control services. Although there are no written agreements between DFG and the Sonoma, Solano and Marin County mosquito abatement districts (MADs), DFG is currently working with these MADs to monitor and solve mosquito issues in the Management Units within these two counties (Taylor 2008b). Formal partnerships with these MADs are anticipated to occur in the future.

#### **4.4 HUNTING PROXIMITY TO RESIDENTIAL AREAS**

Hunting noise and safety are concerns for residential areas neighboring NSMWA. The presence of existing residences, structures, and railways is one of the main factors in determining whether hunting is appropriate for a given site. Future regulations in the NSMWA may include closing the American Canyon Unit to hunting because of the close proximity of the adjacent residential area to the Unit (Huffman 2007a).

#### **4.5 AIRPORT SAFETY (BIRD STRIKE HAZARDS)**

The Napa County Airport is located immediately east of Napa Plant Site (URS 2006a). Bird strike hazards to aircraft using the Napa County Airport were raised as a concern in comment letters responding to the Draft Environmental Impact Report (DEIR) for the Napa Plant Site Restoration Project. Multiple issues were presented in comment letters regarding the relationship between bird use of the Napa Plant Site ponds and bird strike hazards to aircraft using the Napa County Airport (URS 2006c).

FAA Advisory Circular 150/5200-33A provides guidance on certain land uses that have the potential to attract wildlife on or near public use airports. FAA's Advisory Circular number 150/5200-33 recommends locating *airport development projects* 10,000 feet away from wildlife attractants that create hazardous conditions for airports serving turbine-powered aircraft. The FAA recommends the 10,000-foot buffer because wildlife can pose a safety threat to aircraft, particularly during take-off and landing. All the wetland and aquatic area in the Green Island Unit are within a 10,000-foot radius of the end of Runway 6/24 and have been there since the airfield was established.

To address bird strike issues, DFG incorporated measures into the design of the Napa Plant Site Restoration project that will reduce the potential for attracting birds with high Relative Hazard Scores (RHSs). DFG will consider bird strike hazards when implementing future restoration within the 10,000-foot buffer of the Napa County Airport.

#### **4.6 URBAN ENCROACHMENT**

Threats of residential and industrial encroachment are greatest along the east side of the Napa River between Napa and Vallejo, on the west bank of the Napa River between Cutting's Wharf and Edgerley Island, and in the vicinity of Schellville. These developments may encroach on the buffer zones needed to fully protect the resources of NSMWA. In addition, as urban development increased in adjacent areas, issues may arise between public uses of NSMWA and its neighbors.

#### **4.7 NON-COMPATIBLE USES OF THE WILDLIFE AREA**

Several recreational uses are considered incompatible with wildlife and/or management of the NSMWA. These uses include, but are not limited to, landing of hot-air balloons, windsurfing, and horseback riding. DFG would review any activities proposed for the NSMWA to determine if they are compatible with wildlife and management goals in the NSMWA.